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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 000262

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DS, EB/TRA AND EUR/SE
ROME FOR FAA
PARIS FOR TSA
DHS FOR TSA

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PTER](#) [EAIR](#) [TU](#)
SUBJECT: Police Working on DHS Emergency Aviation
Amendments; Supportive of Fixing Gap in Border Controls

Ref: (A) 2003 State 348468 (B) 2003 Ankara 8023
(C) 2003 Ankara 7597

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action cable. Please see para 8.

Summary:

[1](#)2. (SBU) Turkish police officials told us that they are working on a system to ensure that the GOT can deploy an armed law enforcement officer to civilian flights if requested by the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) under recent aviation emergency amendments. They also said they supported institution of border and customs controls for international passengers at the first port of entry in Turkey. End Summary.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Econoff and Econ Specialist met with Mustafa Bal, head of the Turkish National Police' (TNP's) Protection Department, and Turgay Sahan, head of the TNP's Airport Division, on January 9 to discuss Turkey's plans to comply with the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS') aviation amendments on posting armed law enforcement officers on flights to or over the United States if requested, and to urge that correction of a gap in immigration and customs controls for certain flights arriving at Turkish airports.

Reaction to DHS Aviation Emergency Amendments

[1](#)4. (SBU) Bal told us that the Interior Minister had been informed of DHS' December 28 amendments (ref A) which require carriers to provide an armed government law enforcement officer on flights specified by TSA, and that he was following this issue closely. TNP is working with the Transport Ministry and other stakeholders to iron out organizational details. Bal stated that the Interior Minister has the authority to deploy a law enforcement officer to a flight and that he was prepared to take this step if needed. Bal emphasized that TNP is identifying a pool of officers with aviation experience that could be called on to perform this duty, and said they planned to provide about 15 days of training to each of them. However, TNP told us that it and others in the GOT are concerned about the cost of buying airplane tickets for the law enforcement officers that would be ordered to fly.

[1](#)5. (U) Bal and Sahan asked us to provide background on the organization and financing of the USG's air marshal program, and also expressed interested in specialized USG training for Turkish police selected to travel as air marshals.

Gap in Immigration/Customs Control

[1](#)6. (SBU) Econoff again raised a loophole which could allow international passengers to avoid passing through border and customs controls in some airports (refs b and c). In Ankara, airline staff direct international arrivals connecting through Istanbul to a bus taking them to a terminal with border and customs controls, and

domestic passengers to another terminal without those controls. However, staff do not always check to ensure that arriving passengers board the correct bus.

17. (SBU) Bal agreed with his colleagues in the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (ref B) that passengers should be required to clear customs and border control at the initial point of entry to Turkey, and said he would recommend this to his superiors. However, he said that other state bodies, such as Customs and the Jandarma, might resist the change on the grounds that it could have a budgetary impact for them. (Customs U/S Saygilioglu, however, told us January 7 that he supported the change. Transport U/S Kutlu, on the other hand, told us January 6 that he thought the problem had been fixed. After checking with his staff, he confirmed the problem existed and promised to look into it.) The issue will be discussed at the next meeting of the National Civil Aviation Security Board in late January or February.

18. (U) Action Request for DHS/TSA Paris: Post would appreciate background information on the organization and financing of the U.S. sky marshall program which could be shared with the Turks. We would also encourage DHS/TSA to consider training possibilities for the GOT in this area.
Edelman